

Delaware Department of Agriculture asks Delawareans to keep an eye out for hungry pests

Photos of Delaware Department of Agriculture's surveillance of Emerald Ash Borer can be found on [Flickr](#).

DOVER – Are you helping invasive pests spread in Delaware or around our country? You may have heard that invasive plant pests and diseases are primarily introduced through commercial trade—that's true. But once they are here, these destructive plant pests don't move far on their own; they are mostly spread by us. Through our everyday actions—when we take firewood from home to our campsite, mail a gift of homegrown fruits or plants, or order plants, seeds or fruit online from uncertified or uninspected sources—we can contribute to the unintentional spread of any number of destructive plant pests. So when people wonder if their individual actions really matter—the answer is yes.

On a daily basis, our staff is on the lookout for damaging pests like imported fire ants, the Asian Longhorned Beetle, and Ramorum blight. In 2015, imported fire ants were detected during a routine check during an inspection of tropical nursery stock. Fortunately, they were eradicated and no longer pose a threat. We need your help to keep it that way. That's why it is important for everyone to learn more about these destructive plant pests, take responsibility, and help us stop the spread of invasive species.

It only takes one person to move something they shouldn't. While they are a strong flyer, it is most likely the emerald ash borer (EAB) beetle hitchhiked into Delaware. And now all

of our urban, suburban and rural ash trees are at risk of attack by this devastating pest. And, the risks from EAB stretch well beyond New Castle County and Delaware borders, today EAB infestations are in 30 States.

Invasive plant pests and diseases are a threat in almost every state. If we allow them to enter and become established, these pests could devastate our neighborhoods and public green spaces, and cause damage to native species of plants, forests, watersheds, lakes, rivers and water delivery systems. As it stands today, damage from invasive plant pests costs our nation about \$40 billion annually.

To protect our State, we are asking Delawareans to join us in the battle against invasive plant pest and diseases. If you suspect an invasive pest or disease, contact our Plant Industries section at (302) 698-4500. Get acquainted with the hungry pests that would like to dine in Delaware by visiting www.hungrypests.com. This April–Invasive Plant Pest and Disease Awareness Month—we urge you to help stop the spread of these harmful pests.

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